

Council voting on handover of poor-performing golf courses

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Montgomery County Council members will vote today on whether to hand over four failing public golf courses to the Revenue Authority for the next 40 years.

The courses in question — Needwood, Little Bennett, Northwest and Sligo Creek — have been losing the county close to \$1 million annually over the past decade.

The Revenue Authority took

temporary control in April, but if the agreement is approved, that arrangement would be in place for the next 40 years, giving authority members sufficient time to turn things around, officials said.

Michael Padden, a legislative analyst for the County Council, said the issue of golf management was pushed up in the schedule so that a lease could be signed by Nov. 1.

"There's a debt payment due by that date, so this would confirm who is responsible for paying that money," he told *The Examiner*.

The reasons for the staggering financial problems encountered at the

quartet of county courses are many, according to the planning board.

Despite the initial rise in popularity of the sport when Tiger Woods joined the tour, golf has not quite caught on in Montgomery County, said Bill Mooney, of the Parks and Planning Department. The poor conditions of the facilities themselves also have been culprits, he said.

It's been estimated that as much as \$10 million will be needed to make needed upgrades. Plans for what will be done and where the money will come from are forthcoming.

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